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The Yoke



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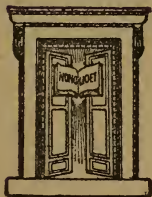
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THE YOKE

BY
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II



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DEDICATED TO
EVERYONE WHO HAS HELPED TO INSPIRE IN ME
UNSELFISH IDEALS

“Take my yoke upon you and learn of me.”—JESUS CHRIST.

PROEM

THERE is among pew-renters today a widespread feeling of complacency.

There is no saying of Christ's which justifies the Christian in an easy life. True, Jesus taught rest, freedom from worry, spiritual contentment, as the earthly rewards of His Kingdom. He said, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. . . . Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, . . . for my yoke is easy and my burden is light." But nowhere said He, "There is no yoke, there are no burdens to be borne." Contrarywise, He told those who were desirous of following Him that they must be prepared to make great sacrifices for the sake of His Kingdom. He predicted persecutions and death. He

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warned His disciples in the parable of the sower that they were destined often to labor in vain, and hence their work would be disheartening and despair-provoking. He declared that he who would not forsake father or mother, brother or sister or wife for the sake of His truth was valueless to Him. Constantly He insisted that His followers must sacrifice their selfish desires, surrender their unworthy ambitions, consecrate their earthly possessions, if they would enter into the fulness of life in the Kingdom of God.

Let us take a single sentence as concentrating these teachings of Christ into a compact whole: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

Christ does not say, "This is one way of pleasing me." He does not say, "I would suggest that this is the most advisable way of obedience." But He says, "If any man

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will, *let him do this.*" Let him! It has the force of an imperative. He must. There is only one Master, and He lived only one life. Hence there is only one way to imitate Him. This is one of the most incisive statements the Master ever uttered. There need be no theological disputes over the meaning of this passage, . . . and indeed there would have been few over any passage, if the rabbis had conned better the lesson of this one. Nor can there exist doubt as to the universality of its application. "If *any* man will." With that word *any* Jesus stamps this saying as having significance for the whole church in every age.

These then, are the requirements of the religion of Jesus, the conditions of any man's fellowship with Him in His Kingdom:

First, he must deny himself;

Second, he must take up his cross;

Third, he must follow Him.

This is the YOKE.

“Whosoever would save his life, shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.”—JESUS CHRIST.

I

SECURING THE POISE

IN the ancient church there grew up a strong feeling that men could not live a life pleasing to God if they mingled in the world. Pagan tendencies had so deprived the world of a distinctly moral aim, pagan customs had so filled the world with the atmosphere of license, heathen religions had become so debauched by the indiscriminate mingling of gods good and bad in the great pantheon of the later empire, and the unprecedented prosperity of Rome had so encouraged the materialistic tendencies which cropped out with the realization that the old religion was but a system of myths,—that men who came into contact with the vital spiritual impulse of Christianity felt

Let him deny himself.

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they must flee from all which would tempt them to breathe in again the atmosphere in which they had been reared. And so they absented themselves from the haunts of men. Some went into the deserts seeking escape from all that would suggest the evil thoughts which had formerly controlled them. Others sought out caves. And where desert and cave were too remote, monasteries were built on lonely rocks.

By and by, however, men began to discover that even the stone walls of a monastery will not shut sin out of the life. For there is a whole world in a single man,—a world of sin and self-seeking. Some of these old monks found themselves falling a readier prey to the sins which beset them in their seclusion, than if they had lived in the haunts of men. There is no escape from the presence of sin. The only escape is from its power. The early ascetic conception of a life of self-denial was, there-

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fore, a false one. Self-denial is not absence from the world; it is absence *of* self.

The modern church has never advocated such a life as the ascetics of the early period attempted to pursue, for it would be utterly impracticable in this age of commercial activity, when existence itself has become contingent upon uninterrupted intercourse with our fellows. But a doctrine not essentially different has been preached with vigor in some quarters. This opinion would have it that the Christian must "give up" certain specified pleasures. The doctrine grew partly out of a deep, though perhaps morbid, religious feeling; partly out of ignorance of the healthful elements in some of the pleasures listed in this *Index Prohibitorum*; and partly, perhaps, out of a misapplication of the saying of the great apostle, that if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no more meat. The christian life is not a life of license; but

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neither is self-denial a series of acts by which one deprives himself of a certain specified list of worldly pleasures and goods. Religion is concerned not with the regulation, but with the motivation, of conduct. And a life lived after this modern ascetic pattern is an argument against itself. It is a demonstration that there is behind the outward act no deep-seated, abiding fellowship with God. For such fellowship would lead to a free and spontaneous, and not a ritualistic, flow of action. Real religion is natural, and regenerates not the action first, but the principles from which action springs. The man who had really denied himself would not ask, "What must I do to be saved?" For this is a question of self-recognition. Did Jesus ask Himself such questions? He saved others. It did not occur to Him to save Himself.

Turn to the fourth chapter of Matthew, and let the Master illustrate His own pre-

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cept. In the gigantic scene there portrayed, the Lord of Heaven is taken upon a very high mountain so that He may look out, and with His spiritual vision behold all the kingdoms of the world, their glory, their wealth, their power. And in the seeing He feels His own powers rise within Him; His ambitions surge like billows against the rock walls of His soul. The voice of Satan speaks: "All these things will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me." Jesus replies, "Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." With that answer Satan leaves Him. With that, Christ renounces self, casts forever behind Him the call of this world to wealth, power, pleasure, and ease. And henceforth through all His ministry the Saviour leads a self-denying life, pleading with men, healing men, blessing men; fleeing from publicity, shunning

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praise and popularity. The supremacy of God's will and the urgency of man's need become henceforth the presuppositions of His conduct.

In the light of the Master's life there can be no doubt as to the sternness of this requirement that the disciple shall deny himself. In the same meaning of the word in which it is said that Peter made his so nearly fatal mistake,—denied his Lord,—in that same sense is the disciple to deny himself, refuse longer to know himself, and know and acknowledge only Christ and the aims of His Kingdom.

There is a famous statue by an American sculptor, which embodies the thought that there are two natures in man struggling for the mastery. The work represents the better nature rising over the almost-prostrate form of the worse, whose abundant physique suggests brutality, whose face is the very portrait of lust. The other figure

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is more lithe and graceful. No longer locked in the deadly conflict, it has freed itself, and with foot planted on the prostrate form, bends forward as though in search of visions. The thought in this statue embodies all that is involved in self-denial: the struggle, represented in the work as a whole; the lower nature held down, and the new man rising in aspiration, now unconscious of the evil genius at his feet. Had the artist portrayed the better nature still involved in the conflict, the picture would be incomplete. True self-denial costs a struggle. It means the putting down of self. But it has a more positive aspect. The purer nature must become unconscious of the worse, absorbed in visions and ideals of the heavenly life.

A child will not learn to do good merely by being told to avoid evil. He must have something good proposed to him. No more can the soul learn renunciation merely by

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striving against the evil nature. An artistic sense will not be developed simply by taking the lewd pictures from the wall. Beautiful pictures must be hung in their stead. So long as we merely will not to yield to temptation the very determination itself suggests the evil, and often makes us more helpless before it. It is better to pray for God's help to do right than to ask divine aid not to commit wrong. If we deny ourselves we forget ourselves. We cannot forget ourselves so long as we insist on thinking about ourselves. And we cannot cease thinking about ourselves until we begin thinking about something better. The man in the statue has forgotten the baser being at his feet in the gleam, the vision, which his pure eye has caught. If we would indeed meet the requirement of the Master, we must throw our whole might into the knowing of God's will and the doing it.

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The attainment of self-denial therefore requires the tireless pushing upward of our christian ideals. There can be no resting on past laurels. He who stops to meditate on what he has given up has not yet given it up. Renunciation implies forgetfulness of the thing renounced. Self-renunciation resolves itself into self-oblivion. It is not I, but Christ who liveth in me.

Self-consciousness is one of the greatest hindrances to effective work in the ministry. The minister or orator who consciously seeks to gain a hearing for himself seldom succeeds in doing so. The message must master the man, if the man is to master the audience. So also it is necessary for every christian to identify himself with the message of his Christ. Like the wilderness prophet, we are to be, not Elijahs nor Jeremiahs, but Voices for God. Hence it is only in so far as we sensitize and surrender every power to the full use

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of the Master that His Spirit can use us to speak, and to teach, and to live the divine message which God has intended us to communicate. It is said of Haydn that he never attempted to compose until he had prayed, and of Gounod that he had the face of the Christ carved upon his instrument to remind him whose power he needed in his work. These great masters of music doubtless had a divine calling, but so have we. We are God's voices in the world, God's lives to be lived pure before men.

Yet is the world full of "christian" people who love pleasure more than they love God, whose ideal is comfort, to whom self-repression is repulsive. They will not put pressure on themselves; they will not give their means, they will not sacrifice their leisure moments or their culture,—so-called. Much less will they deny *themselves* for the sake of making the world a little better. Yet they think they are

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obedient servants of Christ. They need to learn the lesson of the old legend:

A subject consulted his king as to how he might escape the enticements of the world. The king commanded him to fill a goblet with wine to the very brim, and carry it through the streets of the city. An executioner was ordered to follow him, charged to remove his head should he spill a single drop on the ground. The man carried the goblet in safety, and returned to the palace. "What did you see by the way?" asked the king, when he came back. "Did you see the traders in the market-place, the jugglers on the street?" The man replied that he had not seen them. His mind had been so absorbed in his task that not a thought wandered to the interesting scenes by the way. "So learn thy lesson." Said the king. "Become absorbed in God, and thou shalt be dead to the enticements of the world."

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It is just in proportion as our thoughts dwell in God, and in the task of lifting the world up to Him that we lose our selfishness and find ourselves. May it be our whole ambition so to forget ourselves that His Spirit may flow through us, that His great power may use all our weak powers; that like Jesus, we may live vicarious lives, and fill well the place God has for us to fill in the world.

“Measure thy life by loss instead of gain,
Not by the wine drunk, but by the wine poured
forth,
For life’s strength standeth in life’s sacrifice.”

Not he who scorns the Saviour's yoke
Should wear His cross upon the heart.

—SCHILLER.

II

LIFTING THE LOAD

“**H**E that doth not take up his cross and come after me is not worthy of me.” These words carry our minds forward in the story of Jesus’ career to ^{And take up his cross.} the time when we see Him toiling up Calvary. The curious crowd is thronging Him as He passes down the street of the Holy City which since has been called the Via Dolorosa. The day is bright after the long night of trial and suspense, and the early morning of unjust cries and final condemnation. The Sufferer bows beneath the weight of His heavy cross. The sun grows warmer. The crowd increases. It seems that all Jerusalem is pouring itself out into the street, intent as one man on the awful

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event which is about to transpire upon the neighboring height; but whose significance the city does not grasp. An innocent person has become the victim of a corrupt political machine, whose power He has antagonized. It is appalling, to be sure, but it has happened before. They do not realize that the man, whose death-agonies they are about to witness, is the Saviour of the World.

Now they are out upon the road. The way becomes more rugged. The ascent is begun. The flesh of the brave Christ, weakened through the night of heart-break, is no longer sufficient for the load of the heavy cross. The rough soldiers with mailed hands lay hold upon a passer-by, one Simon, of Cyrene, and impress him into service. He bears the tree behind the Prisoner. The brow of Calvary is reached. Above the fearful silence of the crowd, broken by the wailing of women, the

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thud of the mallet is heard as it drives the cruel nails through the flesh of hands and feet. The moments then pass like hours; but at length it is finished.

The disciples scatter, then assemble again until Pentecost. They brood over the meaning of it all. Many sayings of their Master, once obscure, have been made clear by the events of the Last Week. They recall that He said to them before His death, "He that doth not take up his cross and come after me is not worthy of me." The significance of these words flashes upon them. And Matthew goes home and records this among his remembered sayings of Jesus. So it has come down to us. And in the light of this last morning of the Saviour's life, its meaning to us also becomes clear.

The cross was but the culmination of Jesus' career. For He lived a vicarious life as well as suffered an unjust death.

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The physical burden of Calvary was but a symbol typifying His whole life-work. Jesus constantly carried crosses. He bore the cross of pain for the diseased; He carried the load of grief for the sorrowing; He lifted the weight of sin, the burden of infamy, from the penitent souls of men. From the time of the climactic forty days in the wilderness He bore penalty for the sins of others.

For the blunders of His people Christ consciously suffered. He suffered with the weak against the strong, with the oppressed as a protest against the oppressor. He sought the at-one-ment of man with God; and in order to bring about that filial obedience He threw Himself into the breach, and eventually expired upon the cross, failing of the *immediate* accomplishment, but inspiring His disciples with zeal to take up the mission He had left unfinished.

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The Master desires His followers today who seek to be worthy of Him, to continue this work of at-one-ment in the world. It is true that Christ alone, and only Christ, was a sufficient propitiation for our sins. But the actual reconciliation, the at-one-ment of will between man and God, is in fact not complete. If it were, christian work would be unnecessary. Hence the little band whom Christ commissioned to take up the work He had left off, were commissioned to carry crosses, to live vicariously as He had lived, to lose their prestige, their property, their friends, their lives, if need were, in order to accomplish the at-one-ment.

Possibly as much because it stands for this exalted mission as because it represents the love of a suffering Father, the cross has always been a symbol loved by christians. . . . In one of the recently discovered Odes of Solomon,—the

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hymn-book of the first-century church,—we find this beautiful thought: I stretched out my hands and sanctified the Lord; for the extension of my hands is His sign; and my expansion the upright tree.” (Ode 27).

The early christian delighted to find the cross everywhere in the outward world: in the handle of the laborer’s plough; in the mast and yards of the seaman’s ship; and in the human body, when the devotee stands erect with outstretched arms in the act of prayer. This was beautiful; and for awhile the early christians did not forget that the cross was more than merely a mystic token of Christ. For they labored among the same classes to whom Christ ministered. But the cross has not always meant to the church what the Master intended it to mean. After awhile the church forgot. The cross became a superstitious symbol. Ecclesiasticism took the place of

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self-abnegation. Foolish penances were used as conscience-soothers in substitution for service to others.

Too many christians have been like the blind man of a Caucasian village, who was returning from the river one night, bringing a pitcher of water, and carrying a lighted lantern in his hand. Someone meeting him, said: "It's all one to you whether it is day or night. Why should you carry the lantern?" "I do not carry the lantern to light my way," replied the blind man, "but to keep people like you from stumbling against me and breaking my pitcher." Too many folks have used religion for protection only, taking the name of Christ as a guarantee against the filth of the world, or a life-insurance policy good in heaven. Too often it has been true that "men will wrangle for religion; write for it; fight for it; die for it; anything but—live for it."

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Today, however, the church is becoming thoroughly awake to the message of the cross. The message of salvation through Christ? Yes, that is one message. But to the other message of the cross,—the obligation of the individual and the church to sacrifice self for the social and religious salvation of the community, and of the world. We speak of the working christian. The adjective is superfluous. There is no christian who is not a working christian. "He that doth not take up his cross and come after me is not worthy of me."

Let us call to mind a few of Christ's teachings concerning this matter:

A young man once came to Jesus, and, overcome with enthusiasm, declared, "Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." Jesus turned and made this reply: "The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." Christ

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desired this young man to know that he must become His Master's companion in privation and suffering. Enthusiasm unwarned has too often spent itself in words and promises, just as love to God is frequently dissipated in emotional feeling until the well-springs of action are exhausted.

On a second occasion Jesus beckoned to a man in the crowd, bidding him follow. "Suffer me first to go and bury my father," the man replied. Jesus said: "Let the dead bury their own dead, but go thou and publish abroad the Kingdom of God." Harsh reply? Perhaps. Stern, at least. But Jesus was on a stern mission, one that required manhood, and the sacrifice of the dearest ties, and the neglect of the most sacred rites. Here was one who had caught a vision of his spiritual opportunity. Should he go back home and allow the vision to fade? No. There were plenty

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of dead men at home, men deaf and dumb and blind to all spiritual appeal. They could bury a corpse. But this man, he must follow the gleam he had caught.

Action is what Christ wants. The spread of the Kingdom; its realizement in the hearts of all men, and in the ideal human society which its principles will create through the power of the Holy Spirit,—this is the work of at-one-ment which Christ asks of us. Enthusiasm, prayers, resolves for the future are of no effect unless they lead to action. Go out now, and do the thing that lies at hand to be done for God's Kingdom. Dream, if you must, at night. But while it is day, work. In time of war a soldier is good only on the field of battle.

The idea somewhat prevails that the heroic days of the church are past. Once the church was persecuted and then it needed martyrs. Today, in America, the

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church is not persecuted, hence martyrs are not in demand. How much harder it is to find heroes in peace than in war! It may be the days of suffering,—enduring, I mean,—for Christ's sake are past. But only so because the days of christian heroism are past. Believe me, the church still needs martyrs. Not martyrs who will shed their blood and die; martyrs who will keep their blood and live; martyrs who will give to, and past, the point of sacrifice, of their time, energy, means, for the service of God, and for procuring justice and mercy among men. A live martyr today is worth more than ten dead ones. Until we have tasted some sufferings for the sake of helping Godward the community in which we live, let us be sure we have not tasted the full joy of the christian life. To produce an appetite, work. To produce a capacity to enjoy the bounties of grace, christian work. We are made perfect through suffer-

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ing,—not the suffering of sickness, or earthly misfortune, but the suffering of difficult, discouraging, self-sacrificing labor,—the suffering of at-one-ment.

I have used the word suffering; but only for lack of a better word. The alchemy of love transforms suffering into contentment. “Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye are led into manifold trials,” should be to us not merely an exhortation; it should be an experience. The early christians did have this experience of joy in the midst of trial. Read that remarkable statement in the latter part of the thirteenth chapter of Acts. It tells us that “The Jews stirred up a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and cast them out of their borders.” And immediately it adds, “and the disciples were filled with joy.” Joy in the very presence of persecution and calamity! This is most remarkable; yet it is perfectly natural to one in whose heart is established

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that Kingdom of God, which Paul declares "*is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.*"

The love of Christ and of the brethren transforms the entire human conception of duty, of hindrances, of trials and suffering. It turns them all into the joy of loving service, and the happiness of victory over the world. It was Ruskin who compared the christian to grass: "You roll it, and it is stronger the next day; mow it, and it multiplies its shoots as if it were grateful; tread upon it, and it sends up richer perfume. Now these two characteristics, humility and joy under trial, are exactly those which most definitely distinguish the Christian from the pagan spirit."

His yoke is easy and His burden is light, because of the love and the joy of humble service. Ian Maclaren tells a sweet story of his native Scotland. While sauntering along a country lane one hot afternoon he

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met a bonnie wee lassie who was very red in the face from the heat, and who breathed heavily under the burden of a chubby youngster she carried in her arms.

"Isn't he too heavy for you?" inquired the kindly minister.

"He's no' hivvy, sir," came the reply, with a smile of loving pride. "He's ma brither." And are not all men brothers in Christ?

Now these burdens of love and humility rest not only on individuals, but on the church as an institution. It, too, must bear the cross of Christ. One day as I was returning to my room after a long walk through one of the suburbs of Cincinnati, chancing to look up into the sky, my eye was arrested by a strange sight. In the south at an angle of thirty degrees from the horizon there shone in the midst of a cloud a cross of gold, glistening in the last rays of the setting sun. I stopped, amazed and

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mystified. For a moment I was stricken with awe. Then I realized that I was below the suburb in which stands the Catholic Church of St. Francis de Sales, with the tallest spire in the middle west. The cross I saw, apparently alone and unsupported in the sky, was the cross of gold reared aloft upon that spire. The steeple had been blended into the cloud, the cross caught by the dying sun in his majesty. The church in every community should be like that vision, should arrest the attention of every man, woman, and child in the whole scope of its territory, bidding him behold the cross of Christ. But the church, like the steeple should be blended in the cloud, lost to sight.

That Chicago pastor who has for his motto, "The church for the community, not the community for the church," has the correct ideal of the institution which Christ established. Only when the church

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is as a whole giving itself in social, industrial, and spiritual ministrations to its people, is it bearing radiant witness to Christ and the Christ-message.

A church-goer once asked his pastor, "Do you not think the church has wasted a great deal of time since it was founded?" The pastor's answer was correct: "Yes, indeed, it has." The church has wasted time trying to shift its cross from its shoulders; sometimes by putting the whole task upon its clergy, sometimes by denying its duty, sometimes by just lazily and thoughtlessly shirking. The church has frequently sought to fulfil its duty and avoid the effort involved. Much of its pious resolution has been evaporated in vapid worship and overplus of devotions. The past has been a time of overstress on sermons and hymns, and under-stress on action. In many instances worship has apparently become an end in itself, all the

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time and wealth of the church being expended in nursing its own fervor. No wonder her leaders have discovered that our day has great problems for the church to solve. Henry Drummond once truly said that the most of the difficulties of trying to live the christian life come from trying to half-live it. The big difficulties of the present day have accumulated in no small part because in the recent past the church has been trying to half-live its mission.

With the passing of the age of shirking will pass also the time-dishonored plan of concentrating all the evangelistic energies of the church into a three or four weeks' revival "effort." If the church is to have special harvesting seasons it must spend the rest of its time sowing. And there is no reason why the harvest should not be gathered in at every season. For if the church shoulders its cross as it should, it

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will exert enough self-sacrifice to be at work all the time. The Devil never sleeps. Why should the church stand like a gravestone six days a week, with the key in the sexton's pocket? What counts is being everlastingly at it, day after day, week after week, month after month; using every manner of organization which will bring us in touch with men, then winning them to Christ through the power of a consecrated personality.

"If any man will come after me let him—take up his cross." "He that doth not take up his cross and come after me is not worthy of me." This is the call of Christ to the heroic in us. When Garibaldi would raise up patriots for Italy, he called: "I do not offer you pay, provisions, quarters; I offer you hunger, thirst, forced marches, battles, and death." And Young Italy took up arms and followed him. It was the appeal to the heroic that

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led them to sacrifice. It was the sense of the heroic in their calling which led the men of the early centuries to follow the Christ to death. And when this heroic challenge of the Master to serve, to sacrifice, to endure for His sake, is raised aloud throughout the church, the ranks will be filled, and our Lord will go forth, conquering and to conquer.

“Follow me and I will make you fishers
of men.”—JESUS CHRIST.

III

TAKING THE RIGHT PATH

I DO not doubt that when Jesus uttered the words quoted in the margin, He meant them literally. He placed loyalty to Himself first. But He did this because of what He stood for. He was the divinely chosen founder of the New Age. Obedience to Him was necessary for anyone who would enter the Kingdom and enjoy its blessings. Christ declared this Kingdom to be at hand, not in its consummation, but in the beginning of its realization. He gathered disciples about Him and taught them His ideals so that what He began might be perpetuated through them. We are therefore justified, in our knowledge that this was Jesus' plan

Let him follow me.

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for ushering in the New Age, in interpreting this summons, "Follow me," so as to mean the embracing of the principles Jesus cherished, and the pursuit of His aims.

The primitive church was indeed an organized nucleus with the definite purpose of learning the character and ideals of Jesus and disseminating them throughout the community. Discipleship involves an obligation clearly understood. The individual is saved in order that he may help to save society to the Kingdom of God.

"Philip findeth Nathanaël." If the church, like the "Catch-My-Pal" society for the redemption of drunkards, should impose upon every candidate for membership the obligation of securing a friend for Christ, it would perhaps be going beyond its prerogatives. But only because results lie with God. It *is* the duty of the church to impress upon every candidate for

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membership the fact that in entering the organization he is banding himself with others for the definite purpose of propagating the principles and ideals of Jesus, and making them effective in the regeneration of men. There are church members who are not members of the Kingdom. Not because they are hypocrites, but because, while they have been truly the recipients of the blessings of Christ, their lives have not been consciously dominated by the purpose of Christ.

Catching is the result of fishing. We are not altogether responsible for the catch. We are responsible for setting the lines, and watching them, too. "The speedy bringing of the world to Christ is a consequence. The speedy bringing of Christ to the world is the necessary preliminary."

The call of Christ to the fishermen of Galilee involved the abandonment of a secular pursuit for a spiritual work. There

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is but one vocation for him who aspires to be a follower of Jesus. He must be a fisherman. You have heard about the man whose occupation was being a christian, but who made shoes for a living. Paul's vocation was the gospel, but he made tents for expenses. To eat and sleep, to get money and spend it or hoard it, to have pleasure and selfish comfort,—that is to exist. But to live is Christ. When the passion for the souls instead of the dollars of men fills the horizon of aspiration for both rich and poor, there will cease to be any upper and lower classes.

Every genuine follower of the Master is, or comes to be, a fisher of men. There are various ways of fishing, to be sure. There are various processes needful to bring men to Christ. He gave some to be apostles, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers. But the purpose of all is the same,—to “attain unto the unity of the

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faith": that the whole world may be united in the faith of the Master.

The Saviour's mission was fulfilled by living a life and dying a death. And the church's mission is a mission of life-giving by live contact. The disciples first had contact with the Son of God. Then they made contact with the world. It is significant that this word, "follow" of Matthew 16:24 has in the Greek two meanings. First, it means to be one's companion; then, to conform wholly to one's example. This is the logical order in discipleship. The twelve were not fishers of men,—not conformers to the example of Jesus, not in any complete sense propagators of His teaching, until after the resurrection. It is well for the christian to have a period of incubation. But as soon as the message of Jesus is thoroughly understood in its bearings on life the time has arrived to "conform wholly," to bend one's whole energy

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to the realization of the Kingdom of regenerated men.

A lack of this preparation by long contact with the spirit and thought of Jesus forms a menace to the church. Our age is tremendously out after results. We have caught, or rather been caught by, the contemporary spirit. Ministers and evangelists want above all else, tangible results. As a consequence men are persuaded to "surrender all," who are given no adequate conception of the responsibilities which are involved in their entrance into the church. We do not tell people that "The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." We make it as easy and indefinite a proposition as possible. Among the unripe converts brought to decision by emotional campaign methods which overlook the element of instruction in the meaning of the christian life, there is especially to be

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noticed a large class of semi-mystics, who have "found their all in Jesus," to whom the church-services perhaps mean something, but service to humanity nothing. The semi-mystic after a few months becomes an absentee member and is placed on the "reserve" roll.

We need, in order to be true christians, a more patient study of the life-principles of the Master. Before we can be worthy disciples we must needs spend hours and weeks in companionship with the historic Jesus and other hours with the risen Christ. Such companionship will lead us to see in Jesus (1) a Man whose constant source of strength was God; (2) whose life was lived with men in all their walks and pursuits; (3) whose constant effort was to persuade men through faith and works to enter the Kingdom of God, and become heralds of that Kingdom until it shall be accomplished. To conform to the example of Jesus is to

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make these characteristics the distinguishing traits of our lives. This is following Jesus.

(1) God must be our constant companion and source of strength. "I and the Father are one," said Jesus. And He prays that the disciples may be one as He and the Father are one. He says that as the Father and He have an interchange of life and purpose, so have the disciples with Him. It is possible for us to cultivate the friendship of the Father. If Enoch walked with God, so may we. The practice of the divine presence will lead to a clearer understanding of His purpose in the world; so that we may fit into the niche for which we were intended in His Kingdom. No, not the niche, the harness. There are no statues needed, but lives.

The best contemplation of God is the contemplation of Christ. For in Christ God lives. Submission to the Divine, uninterpreted by a life, would issue in that

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oriental and medieval mysticism which invariably puts the christian into a lethargic sleep, keeping him blissfully unconscious of his duty in the world. Pure religion and undefiled is a religion of doing and living. If we come in touch with the real God of whom Jesus Christ is the only perfect manifestation, we are placed in contact not only with a boundless Love, but with an active Force, a powerful Dynamic, a live Purpose. The Purpose is the perfection of the race through the realization of a harmonious fellowship between man and his fellowman, and between man and God. The Force, the Dynamic, the Love all contribute to the fulfilment of the Purpose. To more fully know how this purpose relates to our own lives we must keep company with God. We must study Christ, who is God with us, and that not in the church fathers or the creeds, but in His own utterances and acts.

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(2) Our lives must be lived with men, in full sympathy with their struggles, compassion for their failures, and exultation in their successes. No cloister for us. For us the haunts of men; the field, the street, the shop, the mart, the feast, the palace, the hovel, the jail, the almshouse. When Christ was in Palestine he walked with crowds of sinners, he ate with publicans and harlots. "Is the disciple above his Master, or the servant above his lord?"

We should even be willing to lose a portion of our own purity, if it were necessary, to increase the purity of society. But that is never necessary, if our lives are really transformed by the power from above. Jane Addams tells us in, "Twenty Years at Hull House," that no one ever dared to use profanity in the presence of her father, feeling the sternly righteous character of the man in his very bearing. Such in much greater degree must have

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been the influence of Christ upon the crowds. Such should be the influence of every christian. Purity is not lost by living in redeeming contact with impurity.

(3) We must make a constant effort to persuade men to enter the Kingdom. When once the character of Jesus has been learned it must be propagated. Men first come into vital contact with Christ as lived in a human being. Then with God as lived in the historic Jesus. And seeing the life of Jesus lived out in his followers, observing their superiority to sorrow, their fearlessness in the face of the odds which this world presents, their conquest-power over sin and the baser desires, they learn to covet this conquering and purifying spirit in their own lives. And only when they have desired Him does the Christ come to men. Our lives must cause the desire for Christ to spring to consciousness in the lives of others.

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To follow Jesus is to spend our whole energy striving in love to teach men the value of the Kingdom of Heaven.

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